

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JAKART 09563 190645Z
ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMENBASSY BANGKOK
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AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

S E C R E T JAKARTA 09563

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EGEN, PFOR, ASEAN
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER LEE'S THOUGHT SON TENTH ASEAN MINISTERIAL
MEETING

REFS: (A) SINGAPORE 2915, (B) STATE 026358, (C) JAKARTA 1386
(D) SINGAPORE 0376

1. LEE'S MESSAGE IS THE SAME AS THAT PROVIDED REF D, WITH A FEW NEW TWISTS ADDED. WE SAID THEN AND CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT HIS INTERPRETATION OF INDONESIAN MOTIVES IS TOO NARROW. WE BELIEVE IT INCORRECT TO SAY THAT INDONESIA IS BACKING OFF FROM ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION. IT IS A MATTER OF PACE, WITH INDONESIA'S DEFINITION OF PROPER PROGRESS CONSIDERABLY MORE LIMITED THAN SINGAPORE'S. THIS DOES NOT SURPRISE US, GIVEN THE RELATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TWO ECONOMIES. WE FIND LEE'S APPARENT INSISTENCE ON PUTTING THE ONUS ON CORRUPT GENERALS SIMPLISTIC AT BEST.

2. EVIDENCE FROM THIS END TO SUPPORT LEE'S CLAIM OF INDONESIAN INSISTENCE ON TURNING ASEAN INTO A MILITARY
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ALLIANCE IS LACKING.

3. IT IS TRUE THAT INDONESIA HAS BEEN SEEKING TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF THE ASEAN SECRETARIAT. THE ARGUMENT THAT THIS IS BEING DONE IN ORDER TO ENSURE INDONESIAN DOMINANCE OF THE ORGANIZATION WOULD MAKE MORE SENSE IF THE INDONESIAN INCHARGE (SECRETARY

GENERAL DHARSONO) WERE NOT SCHEDULED TO RELINQUISH HIS POST IN LESS THAN A YEAR. HIS SUCCESSOR WILL NOT BE AN INDONESIAN.

4. THE MAIN POINT OF HIS MESSAGE, HOWEVER, THAT THE US SHOULD TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN SEEKING TO ENCOURAGE INDONESIAN WILLINGNESS TO SEEK ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION, IS THE PART THAT GIVES US THE MOST PROBLEMS. WE HAVE OF COURSE ON FREQUENT OCCASIONS EXPRESSED TO THE GOI OUR HOPE THAT ASEAN CAN BECOME A FORCE FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC UNITY. BUT WE DOUBT VERY MUCH THAT THE INDONESIANS WOULD REACT CONSTRUCTIVELY TO A MESSAGE FROM US SUGGESTING THAT THEY BUY SINGAPORZ'S INTERPRETATION OF VIABLE ASEAN PROGRESS.

NEWSOM

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